

CITY COUNCIL REPORT
PUBLIC

DATE: October 7, 2019

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Andy Bertelsen, Public Works Director
Rebecca Sayers, Parks and Recreation Director
Amy Hagin, Parks Manager

CC: Greg Clifton, City Manager; Sterling Solomon, City Attorney; Shane Dille, Deputy City Manager; Shannon Anderson, Deputy City Manager; Leadership Team

SUBJECT: Chemical / Herbicide Use on City park grounds and turf

City Council requested information on the types of chemicals city staff use on parks grounds and turf.

Discussion

City Parks staff regularly evaluate the chemicals used on parks grounds and turf. Staff currently use limited chemicals on turf, including an herbicide and fertilizers tailored to the need of the specific turf area. The term “herbicide” is defined as an agent or chemical used to destroy or inhibit plant growth. The only herbicide that Parks staff currently uses is called 2,4-D, which is a chlorophenoxy herbicide that kills weeds by disrupting nutrient transport and growth. 2,4-D is targeted to kill broadleaf weeds while not affecting most grasses or turf. It can be found in a wide variety of products in the United States. Parks staff follow state and federal regulations for the application of this herbicide, including Integrated Pest Management (IPM) systems. Eleven (11) staff are currently certified applicators through the Pest Management Division of the Arizona Department of Agriculture, and only those staff members are authorized to apply herbicides on park areas. The full Safety Data Sheet for 2,4-D can be found here: <http://www.cdms.net/ldat/mp4JF008.pdf>.

Parks staff also utilizes fertilizers to aid in grass growth and maintenance. The main fertilizer used is Turf Royale 21-7-14. The three (3) macronutrients contained in most fertilizers are nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. The Safety Data Sheet for this product can be found here: <https://www.yara.us/contentassets/280676bbae1c466799e9d22b57225584/turf-royale-21-7-14-pds/>.

Staff have committed to reviewing all chemical usage in parks and on grounds that Parks staff maintains, including the cemetery and civic sites such as City Hall. With the adoption of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, we are researching other kinds of products and best practices that can be used to mitigate weeds in a more sustainable manner. Our eventual goal is to manage park grounds and civic spaces organically while still delivering the high-quality sports turf and grassy play areas that Flagstaff enjoys today. This is a nation-wide movement among park agencies, and research into other

municipalities' practices shows that many agencies are facing the same difficulty of finding suitable replacements for herbicides. However, City Parks staff is committed to this goal and will continue reviewing products and maintenance methods, as well as working with our peers in other agencies, to achieve this goal over time.

Recommendation / Conclusion

This report is for information only.